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266 *Edward Rushton's Letter to George Washington.* [April.

ed with him, immediately began to inquire after his poetic effusions; in answer to which he said that his last piece was an address to Mrs. —, and her beautiful daughter; who had been lately on a visit at a neighbouring gentleman's seat. We all expressed a wish that he would recite this piece, and after some hesitation he consented; then leaning himself against a tall grey stone, and breaking a sprig of hazel, which he kept twirling in his hand, he repeated the whole in a manner far beyond our utmost expectations. In the piece his own humble state was with some pathos alluded to; and some of the stanzas were highly complimentary to the person addressed; though certainly bordering on flattery, but in no instance fulsome; in short, the whole evinced some genius, and that much pains had been taken to form what I shall call the features of the rhyme.

Taking leave of this child of Apollo, we renewed our pace, lamenting that our time would not permit us to take a copy of the verses we had heard him repeat. This we would have done but for the hurry of our companion who wished to be home soon, as he said on important business. By this hurry we were also deprived of seeing a fine cascade, which we were informed was near, on a small river which we crossed, called *Ar-tog* water, i. e. the water of the little hills.

(To be Continued.)

For the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*.

EXPOSTULATORY LETTER TO GEORGE WASHINGTON, OF MOUNT VERNON, IN VIRGINIA, ON HIS CONTINUING TO BE A PROPRIETOR OF SLAVES; BY EDWARD RUSHTON.

Oh reflect!—that your rights are the rights of mankind,
That to all they were bounteously given,

And that he who in chains would his fellow man bind,
Uplifts his proud arm against Heaven.

IN July, the following letter* was transmitted to the person to whom it is addressed, and a few weeks ago it was returned under cover, without a syllable in reply. As children that are crammed with confectionary, have no relish for plain and wholesome food; so men in power, who are seldom addressed but in the sweet tones of adulation, are apt to be disgusted with the plain and salutary language of truth. To offend was not the intention of the writer; yet the President has evidently been irritated; this however is not a bad symptom, for irritation causelessly excited, will frequently subside into shame, and to use the language of the moralist, "Where there is yet shame, there may in time be virtue.—"

Liverpool, Feb. 20, 1797.

* Some extracts from this energetic letter were published in the first Volume of the *Belfast Magazine*, page 90; the whole letter may probably be interesting to the readers of the *Magazine*, as it contains excellent remarks on the inconsistency of a person, who after having fought for liberty, continued to keep slaves. The Americans, who enjoy so much freedom, are inexcusable in keeping slaves; and the publication of advertisements in their Newspapers, of the sale of Negroes is a disgrace to their national character. It is unjust to suppose that white men are alone to enjoy the blessings of freedom.

Cowper in a pathetic little poem entitled the "Slaves Complaint," makes a fine appeal to his readers in favour of the Negroes,

"Fleecy locks and black complexion,
Cannot forfeit nature's claim,
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

* * * * *

"Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find,
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind."

To *George Washington, &c. &c.*

IT will generally be admitted, Sir, perhaps with justice, that the great family of mankind were never more benefited by the military abilities of any individual, than by those which you displayed during the memorable American contest. Your country was injured, your services were called for, you immediately arose, and after performing the most conspicuous part in that blood-stained tragedy, you again became a private citizen, and unambitiously retired to your farm. There was more of true greatness in this procedure than the modern world at least had ever beheld; and while public virtue is venerated by your countrymen, a conduct so exalted will not be forgotten. The effects which your revolution will have upon the world are incalculable. By the flame which you have kindled, every oppressed nation will be enabled to perceive its fetters; and when man once knows that he is enslaved, the business of emancipation is half performed.—France has already burst her shackles, neighbouring nations will in time prepare, and another half century may behold the present besotted Europe without a peer, without a hierarchy, and without a despot. If men were enlightened, revolutions would be bloodless; but how are men to be enlightened, when it is the interest of governors to keep the governed in ignorance? “To enlighten men,” says your old correspondent Arthur Young, “is to make them bad subjects.” Hurricanes spread devastation; yet hurricanes are not only transient, but give salubrity to the torrid regions, and are quickly followed by azure skies and calm sunshine. Revolutions, too, for a time, may produce turbulence; yet revolutions clear the political atmosphere and contribute greatly to the comfort and happiness of the human race.

What you yourself have lived to witness in the United States is sufficient to elucidate my position. In your rides along the banks of your favourite Potowmack, in your frequent excursions through your own extensive grounds, how gratifying must be your sensations on beholding the animated scenery around you, and how pleasurable must be your feelings, on reflecting that your country is now an asylum for mankind; that her commerce, her agriculture, and her population, are greater than at any former period; and that this prosperity is the natural result of those rights which you defended against an abandoned cabinet, with all that ability which men who unsheathe the sword in the cause of human nature will, I trust, ever display. Where liberty is, there man walks erect and puts forth all his powers; while slavery, like a torpedo, benumbs the finest energies of his soul.

But it is not to the Commander in chief of the American forces, nor to the President of the United States, that I have aught to address, my business is with George Washington, of Mount Vernon, in Virginia, a man who, notwithstanding his hatred of oppression, and his ardent love of liberty, holds at this moment hundreds of his fellow beings in a state of abject bondage.—Yes! you, who conquered under the banners of freedom, you, who are now the first magistrate of a free people, are (strange to relate) a slave-holder. That a Liverpool merchant should endeavour to enrich himself by such a business is not a matter of surprise, but that you, an enlightened character, strongly enamoured of your own freedom, you who, if the British forces had succeeded in the eastern states, would have retired with a few congenial spirits to the rude fastnesses of the western wilderness, there

to have enjoyed that blessing, without which a paradise would be disgusting, and with which the most savage region is not without its charms; that you, I say, should continue to be a slave-holder, a proprietor of human flesh and blood, creates in many of your British friends both astonishment and regret. You are a republican, an advocate for the dissemination of knowledge and for universal justice—where then are the arguments by which this shameless dereliction of principle can be supported? Your friend Jefferson*

* Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than the whites. Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimentalist† has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it. They seem to require less sleep. A black, after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out by the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this perhaps may proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their females; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears

† Crawford.

has endeavoured to show that the negroes are an inferior order of being, but surely you will not have recourse to such a subterfuge. Your slaves, it may be urged, are well treated—That I deny—man never can be well treated who is deprived of his rights. They are well clothed, well fed, well lodged, &c. Feed me with ambrosia, and wash it down with nectar, yet, what are these, if liberty be wanting? You took arms in defence of the rights of man. Your negroes are men—Where then are the rights of your negroes! They have been inured to slavery, and are not fit for freedom. Thus it was said of the French; but where is the man of unbiassed common sense who will assert that the French republicans of the present day are not fit for freedom? It has been said too by your apologists, that your feelings are inimical to slavery, and that you are induced to acquiesce in it at present merely from motives of policy; the only true policy is justice, and he who regards the consequences of an act, rather than the justice of it, gives no very exalted proof of the greatness of his character. But if your feelings be actually repugnant to slavery, then are you more culpable than the callous-hearted planter, who

to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.

See Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, page 200.

laughs at what he calls the pitiful whining of the abolitionists, because he believes slavery to be justifiable; while you persevere in a system which your conscience tells you to be wrong. If we call the man obdurate who cannot perceive the atrociousness of slavery, what epithets does he deserve who, while he does perceive its atrociousness, continues to be a proprietor of slaves. Nor is it likely that your own unfortunate negroes are the only sufferers by your adhering to this nefarious business; consider the force of an example like yours, consider how many of the sable race may now be pining in bondage, merely forsooth, because the President of the United States, who has the character of a wise and good man, does not see cause to discontinue the long established practice. Of all the slave-holders under heaven, those of the United States appear to me the most reprehensible; for man never is so truly odious as when he inflicts upon others that which he himself abominates. When the cup of slavery was presented to your countrymen, they rejected it with disdain, and appealed to the world in justification of their conduct, yet such is the inconsistency of man, that thousands upon thousands of those very people, with yourself amongst the number, are now sedulously employed in holding the self-same bitter draught to the lips of their sable brethren. From men who are strongly attached to their own rights, and who have suffered much in their defence, one might have expected a scrupulous attention to the rights of others; did not experience show, that when we ourselves are oppressed, we perceive it with a lynx's eye; but when we become the oppressors, no noon-tide bats are blinder. Prosperity perhaps may make nations as well as individuals forget the distresses of other times;

BELFAST MAG. NO. XLV.

yet surely the citizens of America cannot so soon have forgotten the variety and extent of their own sufferings. When your country lay bruised by the iron hand of despotism, and you were compelled to retreat through the Jerseys with a handful of half naked followers, when the bayonet of the mercenary glistened at your back, and liberty seemed about to expire, when your farms were laid waste, your towns reduced to ashes, and your plains and woods were strewed with the mangled bodies of your brave defenders; when these events were taking place, every breast could feel, and every tongue could execrate the sanguinary proceedings of Britain; yet what the British were at that period, you are in a great degree at this: you are boastful of your own rights—you are violators of the rights of others, and you are stimulated by an insatiable rapacity, to a cruel and relentless oppression. If the wrongs which you now inflict be not so severe as those which were inflicted upon you, it is not because you are less inhuman than the British, but because the unhappy objects of your tyranny have not the power of resistance. In defending your own liberties you undoubtedly suffered much; yet if your negroes, emulating the spirited example of their masters, were to throw off the galling yoke, and, retiring peaceably to some uninhabited part of the western region, were to resolve on liberty or death, what would be the conduct of the southern planters on such an occasion? Nay, what would be your conduct? You who were "born in a land of liberty," who "early learned its value," you, who "engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it," you who, "in a word, devoted the best years of your life to secure its permanent establishment in your own country, and whose anxious re-

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collection, whose sympathetic feelings, and whose best wishes are irresistibly excited, whensoever in any country you see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom."* Possessed of these energetic sentiments, what would be your conduct? Would you have the virtue to applaud so just and animating a movement as a revolt of your southern negroes? No! I fear both you and your countrymen would rather imitate the cold blooded British cabinet, and, to gratify your own sordid views, would scatter among an unoffending people, terror, desolation, and death. Harsh as this conclusion may appear, yet it is warranted by your present practice; for the man who can boast of his own rights, yet hold two or three hundred of his fellow beings in slavery, would not hesitate, in case of a revolt, to employ the most sanguinary means in his power, rather than forego that which the *truly* republican laws of his country are *pleased* to call his property. Shame! Shame! That man should be deemed the property of man, or that the name of Washington should be found among the list of such proprietors.

Should these strictures be deemed severe or unmerited on your part, how comes it, that while in the northern or middle states, the exertions of the Quakers, and other philanthropists, have produced such regulations as must speedily eradicate every trace of slavery in that quarter; how comes it that from you these humane efforts have never received the least countenance? If your mind have not sufficient firmness to do away that which is wrong the moment you perceive it to be such,

one might have expected, that a plan for ameliorating the evil would have met with your warmest support; but no such thing. The just example of a majority of the states has had no visible effect upon you; and as to the men of Maryland, of Virginia, of the two Carolinas, of Georgia, and of Kentucky, they smile contemptuously at the idea of negro emancipation, and with the state constitutions in one hand, and the cow-skin in the other, exhibit to the world such a spectacle, as every real friend to liberty must from his soul abominate.

"Then what is man, and what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head to think himself a man."

The hypocritical bawd who preaches chastity, yet lives by the violation of it, is not more truly disgusting, than one of your slave-holding gentry bellowing in favour of democracy. Man does not readily perceive defects in what he has been accustomed to venerate; hence it is that you have escaped those animadversions which your slave proprietorship has so long merited. For seven years you bravely fought the battles of your country, and contributed greatly to the establishment of her liberties; yet you are a slave-holder! You have been raised by your fellow-citizens to one of the most exalted situations upon earth, the first magistrate of a free people; yet you are a slave-holder! A majority of your countrymen have recently discovered that slavery is injustice, and are gradually abolishing the wrong, yet you continue to be a slave holder! You are a firm believer too, and your letters and speeches are replete with pious reflections on the divine Being, Providence, &c., yet you are a slave holder! Oh! Washington, "ages to come will read with astonishment"

* See the answer of the President of the United States to the address of the minister plenipotentiary of the French republic, on his presenting the colours of France to the United States.

that the man who was foremost to wrench the rights of America from the tyrannical grasp of Britain, was among the last to relinquish his own oppressive hold of poor and unoffending negroes.

In the name of justice what can induce you thus to tarnish your own well earned celebrity, and to impair the fair features of American liberty, with so foul and indelible a blot? Avarice is said to be the vice of age. Your slaves, old and young, male and female, father, mother, and child, might, in the estimation of a Virginian planter, be worth from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds. Now, Sir, are you sure that the unwillingness which you have shown to liberate your negroes does not proceed from some lurking pecuniary considerations? If this be the case, and there are those who firmly believe it is, then there is no flesh left in your heart; and present reputation, future fame, and all that is estimable among the virtuous, are, for a few thousand pieces of paltry yellow dirt, irremediably renounced.

EDWARD RUSHTON.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON HOMER.

HOMER, whom Longinus dignifies with the title of *The Poet*, has had ample justice done to his merits, by the uninterrupted succession of admirers, which every age, since his writings were collected, has brought to his shrine. A panegyric on the excellencies of the works ascribed to him, would at this period be not only unnecessary, but actually impertinent. The unanimity in applause on this head, displayed by ages as different in tastes and pursuits, as in period, by men of every rank, of every nation, and of every time, irresistibly estab-

lishes the claims of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the admiration of mankind.

When a work has passed so many and so varied ordeals, as these have, and all possibility of advancing any thing new on such a subject, may seem fairly at an end, the announcing of any further observations may, at first sight, appear to threaten the *crambe repetita*. It may be advisable then to state, that it is not the intention of this essay to repeat the oft-repeated, and perhaps now nauseating cant of criticism, on the beauty of language, fertility of invention, &c. that have distinguished those writings, but to excite the attention of the literary world, and lead them to consider Homer, and the works ascribed in a point of view, in which I am not conscious of having seen them yet presented.

In all that has been written on this subject, not the smallest doubt ever seems to have been entertained about the tradition, which ascribes the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as they now exist, to Homer. The uninterrupted voice of tradition is certainly a very powerful support to the claims made for him in the fullest extent, but this tradition itself, if fairly examined, seems to admit of some exceptions.

The better way, perhaps, to bring the common traditions concerning him, and the claims founded on them, to test, will be to present the reflections that have arisen from a consideration of the subject, without a formal logical arrangement of cause and consequence.

That part of the traditions which concern his birth-place, parentage, and education, is too well known to require a repetition of it, particularly as the utmost that can be collected from it, is, that he *was born*, and that he *died*. But the opinions of some moderns on this point are so